

# ATSDR DAILY SITUATION REPORT (SITREP) SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2015 FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO)

**SUBJECT:** Gold King Mine Cleanup Site

**SITREP #** Gold King 5

**DATE AND TIME:** Saturday, August 15, 2015, 5 PM EDT

**\* PERIOD REFLECTED:** 08/14/15 5PM EDT through 08/15/15 5PM EDT

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**BACKGROUND:** On August 5, 2015, while investigating the Gold King Mine in Colorado, an EPA cleanup team triggered a release of approximately 3 million gallons of mine wastewater into Cement Creek that ran into the Animas River. The local sheriff closed the river for all recreational uses with notifications to any water systems downstream to close their water intakes. This spill will impact regions 6, 8, and 9 – staff from ATSDR and EPA are working in all three regions to address concerns. On 8/8/15, ATSDR provided a letter health consult to the San Juan Basin Health Department (SJBHD) evaluating water samples collected by EPA.

RED = Updates/Changes since last SITREP

## **SUMMARY (August 15):**

- ATSDR has provided input into EPA and SJBHD plan for interpreting individual results from private well sampling as well as the plan for conducting additional sampling.
  - ATSDR provided some general talking points/resources on interpreting private well water sampling.
  - EPA has requested continued technical assistance from ATSDR (Chief Medical Officer) in crafting messages about individual results.
- The City of Durango/EPA/Unified Command meeting planned for Sunday (8/16) has been postponed; however, no new meeting date has been set.
  - SJBHD requested that ATSDR provide some general public health information that could be used in the above mentioned public meeting, once it occurs.
- ATSDR R8 deployed staff contacted the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center to identify public health concerns reported to the call center by local residents. This information will be used to prepare health education materials and talking points for an upcoming public meeting.
- The Silverton (local) Incident Command has moved from a “disaster response” mode to a “recovery mode”.
  - Silverton will continue discussions with EPA regarding issues related to future clean-up and remedial efforts associated with the Gold King Mine Superfund Site and other area mining sites.
  - The Incident Command will initiate preparedness discussions for future events that could have similar effects in the area (other releases, landslides, etc.).
  - The Silverton local health department discussed potential future collaborations with ATSDR, including using ATSDR’s public health recommendations regarding the Animas River.
- ATSDR and SJBHD discussed ATSDR’s past and future support of the local health department. SJBHD decided that no further on-site support was needed however the SJBHD will continue to coordinate with ATSDR as the response and recovery efforts continue.
  - ATSDR R8 deployed staff departed Durango/Silverton, CO (1400 MDT). ATSDR formally checked out of the unified command within the Durango Incident Command Post but will continue to support response efforts from the EPA R8 EOC in Denver.
  - SJBHD leadership were very thankful for the ATSDR support provided to the local health department/unified command during this response.
- U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) visited the San Juan County EOC in Aztec, NM. ATSDR R6 deployed staff provided a short brief to Senator Heinrich on the public health aspects of the incident/response. Senator Heinrich was very pleased with the work of the unified command, including ATSDR’s contributions.



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- San Juan County (NM) hosted a community meeting (08/14/2015 at 1800 MDT). At the request of the local health department, ATSDR R6 deployed staff participated in the panel and discussed public health activities. No additional questions were raised at the meeting.
- San Juan County (NM) announced the opening of the river for both recreational and agricultural use, along with an all clear to use private well water in the area. The NM Governor also announced that he will put a team together to analyze the long term impacts of the mine waste discharge.

#### **FORECASTING (Next 48 Hours):**

- ATSDR will continue to coordinate with EPA and the Unified Command to gather the additional sampling results (sediment and surface water) and background information as they become available. ATSDR scientists will continue to review this data to better understand any health risks associated with contaminant exposures.
- As the need for on-site support changes, ATSDR will re-evaluate the need for on-site personnel.
  - R6 deployed staff will likely return from the field on Monday, August 17.
  - R9 will likely deploy a staff member to support health education efforts in the Navajo Nation.

#### **ATSDR RESOURCES CURRENTLY COMMITTED:**

| TYPE (PERSONNEL, ETC.)  | #  | ACTIVITIES PERFORMED   |
|---|----|--|
| ATSDR Personnel on the ground — Durango/Silverton, CO (in route back to Denver) and Aztec, NM | 2  | Technical support to local health departments, participating as part of incident command within the incident command.                                  |
| ATSDR staff in EPA R8 EOC   | 1  | Coordinating ATSDR activities with EPA emergency responders.   |
| ATSDR staff in EPA HQ EOC   | 1  | Coordinating between: ATSDR-HQ, EPA & ATSDR Regions 6, 8, and 9, EPA emergency responders. Attends EPA data, planning and regional coordination calls. |
| ATSDR staff supporting the response from HQ and regional offices                              | 5+ | Providing technical support to field staff, reviewing data as requested, coordination, etc.  |

#### **ATSDR RESOURCES REQUESTED:**

| TYPE (DATA ANALYSIS, PH ASSESS., ETC.)  | # | DATE REQUESTED  |
|---|---|---|
| EPA verbal request for on-site personnel to provide community involvement/risk communications support to the Navajo Nation. |   | 08/15/2015 - ATSDR has begun processing travel for (1) ATSDR R9 staff member to deploy to the Navajo Nation/Farmington, NM ICP on August 16 <sup>th</sup> or 17 <sup>th</sup> |

**DISTRIBUTION:** OS/ASPR, OS/ASL, OS/ASPA, IHS, CDC (OD & EOC).